

[Mr. M. R. Madhava Variar.]

MR. JOHN MACKIE (*Planters*): Yes, very cheap.

REV. FR. KURIAKOSE VETTIKKAPALLI (*Todupuzha cum Kunnatnad*): In connection with the administration of the forests, I want to bring this to the notice of the Conservator as well as the Government. The Conservator knows well that smuggling of timber from the reserved area of Manjapra and the neighbouring reserves is still going on, rather on a large scale, in spite of the great vigilance of the forest officers, and I believe it will continue until we have some timber depôts near by from which people can buy their timber for ordinary purposes. As Mr. Kunjitomman remarked, we have no timber depôts in Kunnatnad and Muvattupuzha, in the up-country, from where the people can buy timber. As it is, they have to go for timber to the water depôts at Verapuzha and Vetticad and buy timber, bring it back again, working against the current. Of course, people do not like this. Hence, they have recourse to smugglers. By this, smuggling is encouraged. To put a stop to smuggling, the Conservator must see his way to open some depôts in these parts from where people can buy timber easily.

PRESIDENT: The two hours and a half allotted for the discussion of the motions in respect of this demand have run out. I therefore put to demand the vote of the House. The question is that a sum of Rs. 7.83 lakhs be granted for Demand IV—Forest.

The grant was made.

The Council adjourned for lunch at 2-10 p. m. and re-assembled at 3 p. m.

DEMAND V.—STAMPS.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Sir, I beg to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. '88 lakh under Demand V—Stamps.

Motions 143 to 146

The following motions were not made:—

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI:

143. To omit the allotment of Rs. 200 for petty construction and repairs.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI:

144. To omit the allotment of Rs. 1000 for purchase and repair of machinery.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI:

145. To omit the allotment of Rs. 300 for purchase and repair of furniture.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI:

146. To omit the allotment of Rs. 36 for hot weather charges.

Motion 147.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-titta*): I beg to make the following motion:—

147. To omit the allotment of Rs. 36 for hot weather charges.

I make this motion in order to understand why the framer of the budget is partial to certain departments. With regard to this item of hot weather charges, certain departments are not allowed hot weather charges such as Registration and Forest. But some other small departments are allowed hot weather charges. They are intended for punka-pulling and water-carrying. These are necessary for other departments also. Just to understand why this partiality has been shown to some departments, I have made this motion.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): The sum of Rs. 36 is the cost of punka-pulling for six months.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-titta*): Cannot a peon do that work as is done in other departments?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): In no other department is the peon doing it.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-titta*): They do it in the Sessions Court.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): The peons are for doing office work. They are only two in number. One of them cannot be set apart for pulling the punka.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-titta*): I wanted to know why this partiality was shown to some departments.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): In most departments it is allowed.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-titta*): Not in all.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Some departments might not have been given because they did not ask for it. Some might not require it. Some might be touring departments and hence they might not have felt the need for it.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI (*Quilon*): I wish to know whether cold weather charges are not granted to all departments.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Cold weather charges are not given in the plains. They are given only in the High Ranges, for lighting fire on cold nights.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI (*Quilon*): The Revenue Survey party is given hot and cold weather charges.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): That is only the name of the head of the account.

PRESIDENT: Do you press the motion, Mr. Madhava Variar?

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-titta*): No.

The motion was by leave withdrawn.

[Mr. T. K. Velu Pillai.]

Motion 148.

The following motion was not made:—

148. Mr. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI: To reduce the allotment of Rs. 500 for office expenses and miscellaneous by Rs. 400.

Motion 149.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I beg to move the following:

149. To reduce the allotment of Rs. '88 lakhs by Rs. 100, under Demand V.

Sir, I move to reduce the total allotment of Rs. '88 lakh under Demand V by Rs. 100. My object in making this motion is to get a statement from Government about the necessity for the introduction and retention of service stamps in the State. I think these service stamps can with advantage be done away with.

To my mind there is not much of necessity for the service stamps. We were doing without them till 1087. In that year the introduction of service stamps coincided with an attempt at the re-organisation of the Anchal Department. That proves that they were introduced to show increase of revenue in the Anchal Department and in order to justify its re-organisation. About a fourth of the stamps, covers and cards annually manufactured are found to be service ones. It is difficult to know the actual expenditure incurred in the manufacture of Anchal stamps, cards and covers. The figures given are misleading. On page 38 of the Administration Report for the year 1097, it is stated that, of the gross expenditure on stamps during the year, a sum of Rs. 32,952 was debited to the Anchal Department as its proportionate share. But on page 80 of the same report it is stated that the manufacture of Anchal cards, covers and stamps cost Rs. 80,345. These statements appear to be inconsistent. However, accepting the latter figure, Rs. 80,345, to be the actual expenditure for the manufacture of Anchal stamps, covers, and cards, a fourth of that sum, *i. e.*, about Rs. 20,000, can be taken to be the annual expenditure incurred in the manufacture of service stamps. I think this expenditure might well be avoided.

There is besides another reason that must prompt the abolition of service stamps. It is one of the means now availed of to show inflated revenue. Service stamps are, I understand, annually indented for and supplied to the several departments of the State in very much larger quantities than are actually required for the legitimate use of these departments. I think that that also is not quite desirable.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): I wish to support Mr. Padmanabha Pillai; but I beg to raise another point. On page 50 of the budget estimate I find that the Superintendent's salary is Rs. 225 and that personal allowance at the rate of Rs. 50 per mensem had also been provided for. I may tell the House, Sir, that I have nothing against the Superintendent personally. For aught I know,

he must be a competent officer. He was sent there from the P. W. D because the Managership was abolished. We have made several objections to this principle of giving personal allowance to people. Suitable men should be appointed in vacancies; men of high salaries should not be appointed in low appointments. I think we shall not be justified in spending such a large amount of money on the Superintendent for stamp manufacturing, simply because the officer happens to be a senior officer. Therefore Sir, this arrangement ought to be abandoned and proper men should be put in proper places. The persons getting high salaries should not be put in lower appointments. That is the point in issue.

MR. J. JOHN NIDIRY (*Changanachery cum Minachil*): I am also of opinion that if we can make a gain of Rs. 20,000, the system of service stamps might be avoided.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): I have not got the figures separately for Service stamps. Just now I find that the entire cost of printing Anchal stamps and service stamps and cards and the manufacture of envelopes came only to Rs. 30,760 in 1098.

Mr. Padmanabha Pillai referred to Rs. 80,000 and odd. I would request him to quote the page.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): Page 80 of the Administration Report for 1097, second line.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Evidently that is wrong. That is the statement made by Anchal Superintendent. I am not responsible for that. The actual cost will be found in the last column of the Stamp budget, on the expenditure side. There is only a sum of Rs. 32,292.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): It is only on this account I said that the figures are inconsistent.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): It may be a printer's mistake. The amount adjusted by the Government against the Anchal Department is Rs. 32,952 and it does not show the total cost of manufacture. It is only the price of stamps purchased from the Anchal Department. The actual costs amount to Bh. Rs. 3,130.

That is the revised estimate that the Superintendent has given. The portion for service Anchal stamps cannot be much.

MR. J. JOHN NIDIRY (*Changanachery cum Minachil*): May I know the proportion?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): I am not in a position to give the proportion.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I would draw the attention of Mr. George to the figures on page 37 of the report.

"Service Anchal Stamps and Cards 28,18,000."

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): That will not be the figure for the Service Anchal stamps alone. That includes the whole cost of purchase and manufacture of Sirkar stamps, cards and covers.

[President.]

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I wish to know what is the possible expenditure on the service stamps annually, excluding the price of the material.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): The total receipts under the sale proceeds of Anchal cards and stamps is Bh. Rs. 60,000 and service stamps Rs. 95,000. With some preparation, we can even get very accurate figures from the Superintendent. I think the existence of these stamps is more to the advantage of the public. These stamps cannot be used for any other purpose. It may be very dangerous if other stamps are used.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I wish to know whether it is absolutely necessary to use any stamps at all.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): I think the Anchal Department can legitimately claim the credit for carrying the various letters and parcels on behalf of the Government. That is the practice everywhere.

MR. K. P. RAMAN PILLAI (*Quilon*): Is the Government Press given credit for printing Government papers?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): It is not a commercial department. Their work is part of administrative work.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I wish to know whether there is any other way. I wish to ascertain the value of the stamps that ought to be allowed. We see from the report that even before the introduction of these stamps certain amounts were credited to the Anchal Department.

PRESIDENT: What is the saving expected by abolishing these service stamps?

RAO BAHADUR K. A. KRISHNA AYYANGAR (*Nominate*) (*Deputy President*): We can save the cost of stationery and printing.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): That may give rise to abuses and malpractices.

PRESIDENT: If communications are not stamped, a risk always exists. If they are stamped, there is the guarantee that they are Government communications. Many letters that are not Government letters might also be sent. There is that risk.

MR. M. R. MADHAVA VARIAR (*Chengannur cum Pattanam-tilla*): Can we not use rubber stamps for the purpose?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Any one can make rubber stamps.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedunangad*): Will it not do if these are stamped by a responsible officer?

PRESIDENT: It requires a responsible officer.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): For this purpose the clerk must be considered to be a responsible officer. Somebody must be responsible for such office work.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): The Anchal Department should get the credit for the *tapal* that they carry.

PRESIDENT: The actual cost of printing must, I think, be very inconsiderable.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): The total cost is only Rs. 30,760. The cost of envelopes also is included in this.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): There are service envelopes also?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Much use is not made of them.

Another point referred to by Mr T. K. Velu Pillai is the grant of personal allowance to the Superintendent. In the budget for 1099, no provision is made for the personal allowance of the Superintendent. He is confirmed in his place.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): Local allowance is provided for.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Yes. A local allowance is provided for, because he is in charge of the Mint also.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): I wish to know whether that is not part of his legitimate work.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): They were separate appointments and paid for separately.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): I wish to know what is the pay attached to the post of the Superintendent, Stamp Manufactory.

MR. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): His pay is Rs. 100 to 150.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): What was the reason for raising his pay?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): The pay of the office was not raised. The present Superintendent was a super numerary in the P. W. D. He had to be absorbed in some other department. There was a vacancy here and he was accordingly absorbed and has been now confirmed.

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): I wish to know what is the particular necessity to retain this particular gentleman there on a higher pay. Do the Government contemplate his absorption in any other place?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): There is no chance of absorption, because there is no vacancy elsewhere.

[Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai.]

MR. T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): Are there no vacancies in other departments, Sir?

PRESIDENT: It was apparently not possible to absorb him in other departments.

T. K. VELU PILLAI (*Trivandrum cum Nedumangad*): Have the Government considered the question?

PRESIDENT: They must have.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Ambalapuzha*): With reference to the motion before the House, in spite of the Financial Secretary's explanation, I have not been enlightened as to the particular advantage gained by having service stamps instead of reverting to the old practice of franking Government communications. Before proceeding further, I must draw the attention of the House to page 45 of the Statistics for 1097. I see certain difficulties in the figures for 1097 relating to Anchal and service stamps manufactured and issued in the years 1096 and 1097. Particularly as regards the figures for 1097, I see that the number of 10 cash Anchal covers that were manufactured in 1097 was 16,73,750, whereas the number issued appears to be 17 lakhs and more.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): I do not understand the member's difficulty.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Ambalapuzha*): I take it that the figures for 1097 denote the number actually manufactured in the year.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): No. They denote the number issued.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Ambalapuzha*): The heading appears to be this. 'Stamps manufactured'; that is one column. 'Stamps issued'; that is the other column. Is it the balance of the previous year that has gone to swell the number?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): Yes, certainly.

MR. P. K. NARAYANA PILLAI (*Ambalapuzha*): Well, Sir, the separate figures for the service cards and covers have not been published in the Statistics. From what I have been able to understand from the Financial Secretary, he gives certain figures which are but approximate. Now, the only advantage that has been pointed out in retaining the service stamps seems to be that there is no chance of fraud being perpetrated in respect of communications addressed to Government. Is this the ground upon which this over-production of stamps has been resorted to? Have there been serious malpractices and was it as a result of such malpractices that the Government resorted to this system? If, as a matter of fact, there was absolutely no malpractice the question naturally arises, why Government should be put

to the necessity of manufacturing these stamps entailing a good deal of trouble and labour on the part of the department concerned and issue them to the various offices, wasting so much time in the matter of affixing these stamps, with occasional difficulties caused by the stamps missing and thereby the addressee being called upon to pay over again? Why all this trouble should be undergone, is not very clear. Hence I have very great pleasure in supporting Mr. Padmanabha Pillai's motion.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I have nothing to add to what I said.

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): I too have nothing to say. As regards the question as to what led the Government to alter the old system, I am not in a position to say anything. I have not seen the file myself. The reason appears to me to be the one that I suggested, *viz.*, to prevent all possibilities of abuse. There might not have been any other reason except to enable the Anchal Department to find out the exact value of the covers that they carry on behalf of Government and to give them credit for that. These reasons appear to be adequate. This system is not peculiar to Travancore. This is the practice adopted all over India so far as I know. I think it would not be safe to revert to the old system which must have been abandoned for the above reasons.

MR. T. LAKSHMANA PILLAI (*Nominated*): Was it not one of the reasons to abandon the old system, that, but for these service stamps, it would be very difficult to ascertain the exact weight of the letters, credit being given to the Anchal Department, and would it not also be much better that all the letters are weighed accurately?

MR. K. GEORGE (*Financial Secretary to Government*): I am not sure. I have not read the file.

MR. T. LAKSHMANA PILLAI (*Nominated*): I believe that was one of the reasons.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): I am not convinced of the necessity for the retention of these service stamps; but if Mr. George would give an assurance that he would look into the matter—

PRESIDENT: This is a question of which no notice has been given. The Financial Secretary says that he will look into the matter.

MR. N. PADMANABHA PILLAI (*Karunagapalli*): Then I withdraw the motion.

The motion was by leave withdrawn.

PRESIDENT: I will now put this Demand to the vote. The question is that a sum not exceeding Rs. '88 lakh be granted under Demand V—Stamps.

The grant was made.

DEMAND VI—REGISTRATION.

MR. R. KRISHNA PILLAI (*Chief Secretary to Government*): Sir, I beg to move for a grant not exceeding Rs. 2'66 lakhs under Demand VI—Registration.